



Assured Land-Based Contractor (Verified Seed) Scheme

October 2010



Representing Agricultural and Amenity Contractors



NAAC Assured Land-Based Contractor (Verified Seed) Scheme Standard Contractor Guidance Notes Version 02



October 2010

1. Aims

Quality control and traceability are essential elements in the production of farm-processed seed and the NAAC has taken a proactive role in establishing an independently audited quality standard for mobile seed processing contractors. This will cover the quality of service which the contractor provides and will be known as the NAAC Assured Land-Based Contractor (Verified Seed) Scheme. Mobile seed processing contractors and their customers must co-operate to ensure a safe, traceable seed processing service can take place. This Scheme offers customers genuine assurance about the activity of contractors. Contractors will only be certified if they can meet the appropriate standards.

In addition to the NAAC's Verified Seed Specific Standard, the contractor must also have been assessed against the NAAC Assured Land-Based Contractor (Generic) Standard in the current scheme year. Ideally, both audits will be carried out together. Please note, certification cannot be granted without conformity with the generic and seed standards.

2. Scope

This scheme applies to contractors who are processing seed on-farm using mobile seed processing machinery for use under the direct control of the farmer customer and is not for sale, or intended for sale. This scheme aims to promote a co-ordinated, traceable route between farmer and contractor.

3. Objectives

The NAAC scheme is designed to help contractors involved in the mobile processing of seed to identify the hazards and critical control points of the process. The scheme aims to help the person processing seed to fully understand, and to be able to show full understanding of, the seed processing system and the critical control points of that process. These critical control points will include:

- Ensuring that personnel involved in seed processing are suitably skilled.
- Ensuring that seed materials are traceable and are free from harmful contamination;
- Providing appropriate storage for raw materials;
- Ensuring that processing equipment is regularly and appropriately maintained and cleaned;
- Adopting production processes, such as record keeping, which ensures full traceability;
- Identifying and controlling hazards which might occur.

The scheme will establish a framework of good and safe working practices, to be verified by independent external assessors, that will enable members of the scheme to produce a safe, fully traceable seed processing service to meet the requirements of national quality assurance programmes.

4. Requirements

All clauses of this standard are compulsory requirements of the scheme. They have to be met in full at all times for sites to be granted or to retain their certification.

Contractors must also comply with national law.

5. Auditing

To fulfill the requirements of the Verified Seed Scheme, an annual audit must take place. The annual audit will include a visit to the contractors' base/office and out on-site in the first year, in the second and third the contractors' base/office only. This regime will run on a three year cycle. If the contractor has more than one machine then a different machine must be made available for each annual audit.

6. Operating Procedures

Certification to this standard is conditional on a successful initial assessment visit and surveillance assessments thereafter. The certification system is an independent third party system for determining conformity with product standards. The certification system requires examination of product, the production process, the production environment, and assessment of the quality management system. This will include conformity with this standard for the business headquarters, depots and machines. Acceptance after initial assessment is followed by ongoing surveillance. The certification system is linked to a Certificate of Conformity and, where appropriate, approved scheme marks. The mark is the property of NAAC and is issued, under licence, through CMI Certification.

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**NAAC Assured Land-Based Contractor (VERIFIED SEED) Specific Standard
October 2010**

Std No.	Mobile Seed Processing Specific Standard	Guidance for Contractors
S 1.0 Personnel		
S 1.1	<p>Staff processing seed must have appropriate documented skills and training to match the scale, risks and complexity of the seed processing operation. The company is required to keep records of all training.</p> <p><i>Training can be in-house and should cover areas such as:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>health and safety;</i> • <i>an understanding of the processing plant;</i> • <i>the need for accuracy in use of equipment;</i> • <i>record keeping;</i> • <i>safe and accurate handling of pesticides and seed treatments</i> • <i>traceability</i> 	<p>The inspector will ask to see your staff training records*.</p> <p>From 1st April 2006 all staff processing seed must be PA 1 – Foundation Module, Safe Use and Handling of Chemicals and PA 11 – Seed Treating Equipment, Mobile and Static Equipment certified unless trained prior to 1st April 2006 when staff can hold PA11 only.</p>
S 1.2	<p>For operations where more than one person is involved, there must be an organisational chart detailing all persons working in seed processing and the tasks that they are authorised to perform.</p>	<p>Keep a copy of your up-to-date organizational chart* ready for inspection.</p>
S 2.0 Machine Manager		
S 2.1	<p>From 1st April 2006, each machine to be in the control of a machine manager who must have PA 1 and PA 11 certificates of competence, unless trained prior to 1st April 2006, when staff can hold PA11 only.</p>	<p>The inspector will ask to see a record of the machine manager's certificate numbers refer S 1.1.</p>
S 2.2	<p>Machine manager's responsibilities shall be incorporated in his Job Description.</p>	<p>The inspector will check this is recorded in your personnel file (G 2.4).</p>
S 2.3	<p>Machine managers shall take at least one refresher training course a year as part of their Continued Professional Development (CPD).</p>	<p>Training must be on-going and could be provided in-house. This training would keep the machine managers up-to-date on changing legislation. Training should be recorded in the training records refer S 1.1.</p>

S 3.0 Hazard Analysis and Quality Control

<p>S 3.1</p>	<p>A designated person with awareness and understanding of HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control) must take responsibility for quality control and produce, approve, implement and review a written Quality Control plan. This person must be at a managerial level, HACCP trained and their duties must be incorporated in his/her job description.</p> <p>A designated person must be responsible to produce, approve, implement and review a written Quality Control plan. This must contain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • details of the whereabouts of various documentation or record keeping systems; • identification of any hazards that must be prevented, eliminated or reduced to acceptable levels; • information on any critical points in the manufacturing process that could give rise to hazard and undue risks, together with controls; • details of cleaning operation protocols, to include machinery and equipment; • procedures for ensuring pesticides are approved, also procedures for stock rotation and disposal of out-of-date products; • a summary of the operational procedures in place to ensure the desired quality of seed cleaning and or dressing; • details of the sampling frequency, and procedures; • a written procedure for clean down for processing machinery to prevent cross-contamination between batches / farm. <p><i>(Refer essential documents – An introduction to HACCP)</i></p>	<p>The inspector will ask to see your organisational chart (S 1.2) and training records (S 1.1).</p> <p>The inspector will ask to see your written Quality Control Plan*.</p>
<p>S 3.2</p>	<p>The designated person in S 3.1 must record any departure from procedures agreed in the Quality Control plan.</p>	<p>If you change your procedures keep a record*.</p>

S 4.0 Seed Testing		
S 4.1	<p>An effective seed-testing service must be offered. This can either be through a recognised testing centre or in-house.</p> <p>The contractor must offer the following seed tests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Germination • Viability • Thousand Grain Weight <p><i>(These tests can be carried out in-house)</i></p>	<p>If the testing is carried out on another site by a recognised testing centre then their address and contact details must be recorded along with their UKAS accreditation number (S 3.1) If testing is done in-house, details of the tester's training must be recorded (S 1.1).</p>
S 5.0 Grain Quality		
S 5.1	<p>The machine manager must complete the work sheet before any seed treatment process is carried out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visually check the seed lots to be treated for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Admixture ▪ Injurious weed seeds such as wild oats, cleavers, etc ▪ Sprouted seed ▪ Anything else he considers relevant e.g. ergot • Advise the farmer if the moisture content is above the guidelines recommended on the seed treatment label. Record the moisture content in the work sheet. • Any previous pesticide treatment reported by the farmer/grower, such as pre-harvest Round-up or similar; <p>Complete and sign the work sheet and ensure that the farmer or his representative countersigns.</p>	<p>The inspector will ask to see a copy of the work sheet refer S12.2.</p>

S 6.0 Sampling		
S 6.1	<p>Two 1kg samples must be taken, one before the seed treatment process and then one after the process. The farmer must be given 500g of each sample and the remaining 500g must be retained by the company for six months.</p> <p><i>(Samples must be stored in conditions that will reduce deterioration i.e. cool, dry and free from pests and insects)</i></p>	The company must record on the work sheet that the samples have been taken. The farmer must sign for the samples refer S .12.2*.
S 7.0 Machinery and Equipment		
S 7.1	Each machine must be permanently identified (eg registration number or serial number) and a register of machines must be kept.	The inspector will ask to see your machinery register*.
S 7.2	Machinery must be maintained in a clean condition and in a good state of repair. Records of cleaning must be kept.	The inspector will ask to see your cleaning records*.
S 8.0 Electrical Installations		
S 8.1	<p>All machines must have an Electrical Installation Certificate and a Periodic Inspection Report as prescribed in the national standard for the safety of electrical installations BS7671.</p> <p>The Electrical Installation Certificate must be signed by the person or persons responsible for the design, construction and inspection and testing of the electrical installation work. Such person or persons must be fully conversant with all relevant requirements of BS7671 and must have exercised an appropriate level of control over the work for which they are responsible.</p> <p>The Periodic Inspection Report must include any deficiencies from BS7671 and quantify the urgency of any recommended action. Persons signing Periodic Inspection Reports and involved in the associated inspection and testing must be fully conversant with BS7671. The report will state the recommended interval before the next inspection.</p>	<p>The inspector will ask to see the signed Electrical Installations certificate and the signed Periodic Inspection Form. These forms will be required for each machine or plant.</p> <p><i>(Sample documents for the Electrical Installations and the Periodic Inspection are provided in Verified Seed Supplementary Guidance)</i></p>
S 8.2	Before leaving the depot every day, the machine manager must check that cables and terminals are not in any way worn or damaged; If any fault is noted the machine manager must ensure that suitable repairs are carried out before commencing work.	The inspector will ask how this is achieved.

S 8.3	The machine manager must ensure that service cables from generators are protected from interference from any source, especially from being driven over, at all times.	The inspector will ask how this is achieved.
S 9.0 Use of Seed Treatment (Pesticides)		
S 9.1	A BASIS Certificate in Crop Protection must be held by each person who plays any part in advising on the pesticides to be used and their rate(s) of application.	If there is a requirement for a BASIS certificate in crop protection then the inspector will ask to see the certificate number. The certificate number should be recorded in the training records (S 1.1).
S 9.2	A BASIS Certificate in Crop Protection (Seed Treatments) is required for all staff advising on seed treatments.	If there is a requirement for a BASIS certification in crop protection (Seed Treatments) then the inspector will ask to see the certificate number. The certificate number should be recorded in the training records (S 1.1).
S 9.3	All pesticides / seed treatments must hold a valid 'approval' and Ministerially Approved Pesticide Product (MAPP) number and be within their storage life.	The inspector will ask how this is achieved. Details should be in your quality control plan S 3.1.
S 9.4	Transporting and use of seed treatments must be carried out in accordance with the "Code of Practice for Using Plant Protection Products (refer S 18.0).	The inspector will ask how the chemicals are transported.
S 10.0 Storing Seed Treatments (Pesticides)		
S 10.1	The contractor's chemical store must be BASIS registered if the contractor sells or supplies any pesticides. If the company does not sell or supply then the chemical store must meet the criteria in APPENDIX 1.	If the contractors chemical store is BASIS registered, then the inspector will ask for a valid up-to-date BASIS certificate for the chemical store. If it is not BASIS registered the inspector will assess the contractors' chemical store, this will be carried out using the criteria in APPENDIX 1.
S 10.2	Companies storing over 200 litres / 200 Kgs of chemical for sale or supply must have a nominated storekeeper who holds a BASIS Certificate of competence in the Storage and Handling of Crop Protection Products (store keepers certificate).	If relevant the inspector will ask to see the store keeper's certificate number, This number must be recorded in the training records (S 1.1).

S 10.3	The company store must have an up-to-date stock list.	The inspector will ask to see the stock list for the chemical store*.
S 10.4	Products having exceeded their storage life must be segregated and disposed of safely and in accordance with legislation.	The inspector will ask how this is achieved.
S 10.5	The company must have a spillage procedure in place. Copies of the spillage procedure must be present in the chemical store and with the seed processing equipment.	The inspector will ask to see a copy of the spillage procedure*. This must be available in the chemical store and each of the processing machines.
S 11.0 Farmer Supplied Ingredients/Responsibility		
S 11.1	<p>The farmer / grower must provide a signed proforma and the machine manager must have a copy stating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If any treatment, whether pesticide or gas, has been applied to the grain since harvesting, stating the trade-name of the product and rate and date of application • If supplying packaging, that it is wholly free of any materials formerly contained within it and that the packaging is durable, clean and free of any faeces material • Variety(s) and the tonnage(s) to be processed • A clean safe area will be provided for the contractor. • The storage of the cleaned/treated seed will be the farmer's/customers responsibility • Designated responsibility for waste. 	<p>The inspector will ask how this is carried out.</p> <p>This can be achieved by asking each customer to sign and complete a written proforma*.</p> <p>The written proforma's should be retained on file for inspection.</p>
S 12.0 On-Site Processing		
S 12.1	<p>There must be sufficient natural light and/or artificial light to carry out the processing seed service safely.</p> <p><i>Adequate lighting on the processing machine is acceptable.</i></p>	The inspector will ask how this is achieved.

S 12.2	<p>Work sheets must be used, they must record:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name of the machine manager; • Operator's name; • Where possible, field of origin/batch number; • Variety; • Dressing Applied and rates of Application; • Processing equipment cleaning records; • Operation type, bulk cleaning or processing <p><i>(Plus the information required in S 5.1, 6.1)</i></p>	<p>The inspector will ask to see a copy of the work sheet*.</p> <p>An invoice may also be appropriate.</p>
S 12.3	<p>A copy of the finished work sheet must be provided to the farmer/customer. A copy should be retained by the contractor.</p>	<p>This may be in the form of a work sheet* or invoice.</p>
S 12.4	<p>For bulk cleaning where a seed dressing is not being applied then the machine must not allow grain to enter the chemical treatment sector. A secure bypass must be used so that there is no possibility of contamination occurring.</p>	<p>The inspector will ask how this is achieved.</p>
S 13.0 Identification of Finished Seed		
S 13.1	<p>Finished seed must be clearly labeled; this label must include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The contractor's Verified seed membership number; ▪ Variety ▪ Dressing applied ▪ Chemical Labels 	<p>The inspector will ask to see the label used.</p>
S 14.0 Storage of Finished Seed		
S 14.1	<p>The farmer customer must take sole responsibility for the on-farm storage of the finished seed.</p>	<p>The inspector will want to see evidence of how this is communicated between the farmer and contractor (S 11.1).</p>

S 15.0 Waste		
S 15.1	Responsibility for any waste (including packaging, screenings etc) must be designated between contractor and farmer/customer.	The inspector will ask how the responsibility of the waste is communicated between contractor and farmer/customer refer (S 11.1).
S 16.0 Disposal of Waste		
S 16.1	Seed-treatment packaging must be disposed of in accordance with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of Practice for Using Plant Protection Products (Defra) • Environment Agency recommendations • Any manufacturers' guidelines (e.g. returnable's) • Local waste disposal contractor 	The inspector will ask how you dispose of the waste pesticide packaging. The inspector will review waste transfer notes. <i>More information on cleaning containers is available on the Voluntary Initiative website:</i> www.voluntaryinitiative.org.uk/content?agr
S 17.0 Record Keeping		
S 17.1	All records must be kept up to date and retained for at least 3 years.	The inspector will ask to review your records.
S 18.0 Essential Documents		
S 18.1	The following documents must be available at the main office headquarters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAAC Assured Land-Based Contractor Generic and Seed Sector Specific Standards (latest versions). • Defra: Code of Practice for Using Plant Protection Products. <i>Defra, revised 2006, A4 166pp, PB 11090 (CD-ROM version is also acceptable)</i> • Industry Guidance, Safety on Farms – A Shared Responsibility. • Code of Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Water (The Water Code) <i>MAFF, revised 1998 A4 97pp, PB058</i> 	Ideally keep a 'document library'* together at the main office. CD versions are acceptable.

APPENDIX 1
Pesticide Storage Criteria
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The following chemical storage criteria must be met in order to pass the NAAC Assured Land-Based (Verified Seed) Contractors Scheme, unless the company is operating a BASIS registered store (refer 10.1).

1.0 General		
1.1	The walls and the floor of the pesticide store must be constructed from a material that will withstand fire for 30 minutes.	The inspector will check and make sure that the walls are made from materials that will withstand fire for 30 minutes
1.2	The bund must be located around the periphery of the store or must be an integral part of the store (i.e. the walls and the floor form part of the bund).	The inspector will make sure that the bund is in the correct place.
1.3	The bund must be able to contain 110% of the total quantity of chemical stored. This figure will increase to 185% in an environmentally sensitive area.	The inspector will visually make sure the bund in place is sufficient in size.
1.4	The bund must be manufactured from materials that are resistant to liquids. The bund must be constructed from the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metal (with special relevance to cabinet and chest stores) • Concrete° • Brick° • Stone Slab° ° Rendering or sealing maybe required especially on the joints.	The inspector will asses the bund to make sure he is satisfied that the bund will retain any pesticide spillages.
1.5	The floor must have no cracks and its sealant must be in good condition	The inspector will make sure that there are no cracks in the floor that could lead to further contamination.
1.6	All windows/doors/lids must be locked when not in use.	The inspector will check that all windows can be securely locked and all doors have a secure lock in place and both are locked when the store is not in use.
1.7	Sufficient lighting must be provided so that chemical labels can be clearly read.	The inspector will make sure that there is sufficient light in the pesticide store.
1.8	Avoid water pipes running through the bunded area.	The inspector will make sure that there are no water pipes running through the bunded area.

1.9	The store must protect the pesticides from frost, if any heating equipment is required then only use equipment that does not have an exposed element.	The inspector will make sure that the pesticides are protected from frost and if any heating equipment is being used it does not have any exposed elements.
2.0 Signs		
2.1	<p>The general danger sign must be appear on the exterior of the chemical store. If the chemical store forms a part of a larger building then a general danger sign must be mounted on the exterior of larger building by the entrance.</p> <div data-bbox="219 544 450 754" data-label="Image"> </div> <p data-bbox="479 587 826 619">General Danger (BS 5378)</p>	The inspector will make sure that the General Danger sign is located on the chemical store or it appears on the outside of the larger building in which the pesticides store forms a small part.
2.2	<p>The “No Smoking” and “No Naked Flames” signs must be mounted on the exterior of the chemical store door.</p> <div data-bbox="282 954 479 1153" data-label="Image"> </div> <p data-bbox="528 1018 692 1050">No Smoking</p> <div data-bbox="282 1174 479 1374" data-label="Image"> </div> <p data-bbox="528 1310 748 1342">No Naked Lights</p>	The inspector will check to see these signs are on the door of the pesticide store.

3.0 Fire Fighting Equipment		
3.1	Fire extinguishers must be present in the chemical store and labeled with the last date of inspection.	The inspector will make sure that there is a fire extinguisher in the chemical store and it has been regularly checked and maintained according to manufacturer guidelines.
3.2	<p>Fire fighting equipment location signs must be in place.</p>  <p>Fire extinguisher location sign</p>	The inspector will make sure that fire extinguisher location signs are in place.
4.0 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)		
4.1	<p>Appropriate PPE for the products contained in the store must be available on-site. The PPE listed below must be chemically resistant and contaminant free:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face shield • Coverall • Apron • Boots • Protective Gloves 	The inspector will check that all items on the list are available in-store.
4.2	Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) must be available on-site if any of the products stored require the use of breathing apparatus.	If there are products in the chemical store that require the use of RPE then it must be available in the pesticide store and the inspector will check this.
4.3	The PPE and RPE must be kept in a dry, clean, well ventilated locker or separate container.	The inspector will make sure that the PPE and RPE are kept clean and dry and away from the pesticides.

5.0 Emergency Spillage Clean Up Equipment		
5.1	An inert absorbent material must be kept in the store in case of a spillage or leakage. <i>The following are suitable:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sand • Granules • Cat Litter 	The inspector will check that there is a suitable inert compound available in the pesticide store.
5.2	A brush with soft bristles and a shovel must be kept with the absorbent material to help in the cleaning up process.	The inspector will make sure they are available in the store.
5.3	Heavy duty impermeable bags with ties must be kept in the pesticide store to contain any spillage waste.	The inspector will make sure they are available in the store.
6.0 Store and Product Management		
6.1	All labels on the pesticide containers must be legible.	The inspector will make a visual check to make sure the containers and their labels are in good condition.
6.2	All pesticides and adjuvants must carry an MAPP number on the label.	The inspector will make a visual assessment on the containers to make sure they are approved.
6.3	Any leaking containers must be put into a sealed impervious container and kept within the bunded area.	The inspector will ask what is done with leaking containers.
6.4	Stock rotation must be practiced in order to keep all pesticides within their storage life.	The inspector will ask how this is completed.
6.5	All dry formulations must be stored above liquids.	A visual assessment by the inspector will be carried out to make sure that all dry chemicals are stored above the liquid chemicals.
6.6	Herbicides must be kept segregated from other products.	A separated area within the store will be sufficient; this will be checked by the inspector.

6.7	Flammable products must be segregated from other products in an area with the general danger sign clearly marked.	A separated area within the store will be sufficient; this will be checked by the inspector.
6.8	Sodium Chlorate must be kept segregated from other products.	A separated area within the store will be sufficient; this will be checked by the inspector.
6.9	All doorways must be kept clear.	The inspector will make sure that the doorways are clear.
7.0 Loading and Un-loading Areas		
7.1	The floor of the loading and un-loading areas must be impermeable; to reduce the risk of further contamination and to ease the cleaning process.	The inspector will check for an impermeable floor.
7.2	Pollution prevention items must be available such as drain bungs, sand bags and a spillage kit.	The inspector will ask to see evidence.

APPENDIX 2

Operating Procedures

Certification to these standards is conditional on a successful initial assessment visit and surveillance assessments thereafter. The certification system is an independent third party system for determining conformity with product standards. The certification system requires examination of product, the production process, the production environment, and assessment of the quality management system. Acceptance after initial assessment is followed by ongoing surveillance. The certification system is linked to a Certificate of Conformity, documentation and where appropriate approved scheme marks. The mark is the property of NAAC and is issued, under licence, through NSF International.

APPLICATION

1. NAAC/NSF International will send contractors wishing to be certified to the Standards an application pack and supporting literature.
2. Contractors should normally make an application in respect of all their enterprises which they run as a single business. However, this is not compulsory.
3. Contractors should complete the relevant form in full and submit it to NSF International together with the appropriate fee. The owner of the business or a duly authorised employee must sign the form(s).
4. By signing and returning an application form contractors agree to be bound by the Scheme standards and operating procedures. The scheme owners reserve the right to alter the standards and operating procedures for schemes where, at their absolute discretion, they consider it necessary to do so and changes will be notified.

MEMBERSHIP

5. New Applicants - Applications will be renewed every October and assessments will be carried out against the standards in force at that time. Fees payable will be notified and may reflect a payment for a past year.
6. Renewal for Existing members– Renewal of certification will be conditional upon the receipt of the appropriate fee on or before 1 October in the year prior to the season to be assured, and a signed declaration that the contractors will continue to follow the Standards and operating procedures.

INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT

7. Routine surveillance assessment will be carried out annually.
8. Once the application or renewal form has been accepted, arrangements will be made for an assessment visit.
9. Assessment visits will normally be by appointment with the contractor. However, NSF International reserves the right to make short notice or unannounced visits.
10. All participants agree to give employees and agents of NSF International reasonable access to their business and relevant sites to carry out the assessment visits required. Failure to do so will result in the suspension of membership. Reasonable notice will be given of any routine assessment visit.

11. Once the assessment visit has been completed, NSF International will either issue the applicant with a 'notice to remedy' for non conformances or forward the assessment report for certification.
12. Certificates may be granted to participants who have had an assessment against the appropriate NAAC Standard and have closed any non-conformances identified at the assessment
Non conformances may be closed by submission of documentary evidence or by revisit. Non-conformances must be closed within 3 months of an initial assessment or 28 days for any subsequent annual assessment.
13. The contractor should inform NSF International once any non-conformance(s) has been remedied and submit documentary evidence. NSF International may then arrange for a site revisit in circumstances where product integrity may be compromised. The costs associated with these procedures, including any additional visits will be borne by the contractor, but will be kept as low as reasonably possible.
14. Assessors may refuse to carry out an assessment in the presence of a third party who they believe will, intentionally or otherwise, influence its outcome in an inappropriate manner.
15. Certificates will be issued when the contractor meets the certification requirements. Certificates are not transferable and remain the property of NSF International. Once a Certificate has been issued, a contractor may promote themselves as 'assured'.

SUSPENSION/TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

16. Failure to supply satisfactory documentary evidence within 3 months of the initial assessment or 28 days of a surveillance assessment or pass a revisit where necessary will result in the contractor being suspended, and the database altered accordingly, until accepted back into the scheme by a revisit or the end of the scheme year at which time they will be deemed to have lapsed. All revisit costs will be borne by the contractor.
17. NSF International reserves the right to suspend or withdraw certification when it considers that it is necessary to do so, such as in the event of a serious food safety issue or the Scheme being brought into disrepute. The suspension will remain in force until either the contractor is accepted back into full membership (by revisit or submission of documentary evidence) or until the end of the scheme year when membership will lapse.

APPEALS

18. In the event that a contractor feels he/she has been incorrectly assessed during an assessment visit, he/she has the option to ask, within 14 days, for a re-assessment by another assessor appointed by NSF International. If the contractor's complaint is upheld, there may be no cost for this and any suspension of membership that may have been imposed will immediately be lifted. If the findings of the original assessment are corroborated, or if it is clear that the company has taken action in the interim that will materially affect the outcome of the re-assessment, the cost of the visit will be borne by the contractor. Any requests for re-assessment visits will be undertaken as soon as possible by NSF International.
19. If a contractor still feels that he/she has been incorrectly assessed following the procedure outlined in the above clause, he will have the option of having their appeal heard by a panel convened for this purpose by NSF International. A contractor may either put their own appeal to the panel or nominate someone to do so on their behalf. In the latter case the contractor will still be expected to attend the panel session. Both parties will endeavour to keep costs to a minimum. In the event that an appeal to the panel is upheld, all costs reasonably incurred by the appellant will be met by NSF International. If an appeal is turned down, any costs reasonably incurred through the operation of the panel will be borne by the contractor.

USE OF TRADE MARK AND/OR LOGO

20. Contractors certified to the standards shall be permitted to indicate that they hold a certificate and, for that purpose only, shall be permitted to use on stationery, publicity materials, exhibition stands and signage, the Verified Seed 'Trade Mark' and/or the Assured Land-Based Contractor 'Logo' in accordance with any directions given from time to time by the Company with regard to the use of the Trade Mark and/or the Logo. Certified participants agree to observe all such directions.
21. The above consent, in so far as it applies to use of the Trade Mark, is limited to using the entire designation "Assured Land-Based Contractor" and, in so far as it applies to using the Logo, is limited to using the Logo in an identical form to that used by the Company. The consent is personal to the certified participant and may not be transferred or licensed to any other person.
22. Certified participants shall not use (or authorise or license others to use) the Trade Mark and/or the Logo in any way outside the scope of the above consent and they shall not use or authorise or license others to use any name, mark, sign or device confusingly similar to the Trade Mark and/or the Logo nor file or cause to be filed any trade mark or company name registration applications containing or confusingly similar to the Trade Mark and/or the Logo. The certified participant will not oppose or cause any opposition to be filed to any trade mark applications filed by the NAAC, register the Trade Mark and/or the Logo anywhere in the world nor otherwise cause any question to be raised concerning the company's ownership of the Trade Mark and the Logo.
23. NAAC reserves the right to withdraw from any certified participant the permission granted hereunder, after giving one months' notice or upon immediate notice if the certified participant fails to observe the directions of the Company with regard to the use of the Trade Mark or the Logo or if certification is suspended or terminated for whatever reason.

CONFIDENTIALITY

24. For the purposes of paragraphs 24, 25, 26 and 27 all references to agents of NAAC refer only to those persons appointed, employed or contracted by NAAC to provide computing and/or database services or in connection with such services as are required to maintain the database referred to in paragraph 24.

Details of registered participants are held on a database. Where an enquirer is able to quote the name and address or name and registration number of a certified participant NAAC or its agents will confirm the member's status as follows: 'Full Member' or 'Suspended Member'. The date of the last assessment visit may also be given. Subject to paragraph 24 no other specific information will be given without the permission of the certified participant.
25. NAAC and its agents reserve the right to also release information from its database about the certification status of a member to a person (for example such as Assured Food Standards) with a legitimate interest in knowing that information if proof of certification might be in the member's interest. The member accepts that information about his lack of certification status may be revealed under the provisions of this paragraph.
26. NAAC may produce and publish statistical reports drawing upon aggregated Scheme data so that individual data cannot be traced back to individual applicants or members.
27. Membership data may be retained on the above mentioned databases and will be treated as specified above for a reasonable time after a person has ceased to be a member of NAAC or one of its land based contractors schemes.

DISCLAIMER

28. Under no circumstances will NAAC or its employees or agents (e.g. NSF International) be liable for any losses, damage, charges, costs or expenses of whatever nature (including consequential loss) which any contractors may suffer or incur by reason of or arising directly or indirectly out of the administration by NAAC or its employees or agents or the performance of their respective obligations in connection with the standards save to the extent that such, loss, damage, charges, costs and, or, expenses arise as a result of the finally and judicially determined gross negligence or willful default of such person.
29. If any competent authority considers that any of the operating procedures are unreasonable, then the operating procedures shall be taken to be varied in such a way as shall make them reasonable but no other part of the operating procedures shall be affected.
30. These operating procedures represent the entire understanding between the contractors and NAAC and each contractor acknowledges that they have not relied upon any other statement (written or oral) in applying to be certified to the standards.